
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MEETING MINUTES

5/11/10

The Board of Selectmen met in the Town Hall, Joseph F. Bilotta Meeting Room as scheduled with Thomas Alonzo, Paula Bertram, Steven M. deBettencourt, Thomas Mason, Dave Matthews and Town Manager Kerry Speidel present. Meeting opened at 7:01 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Town Elections, May 15th, TC Passios Elementary, 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM

2. Lions Club Roadblock – Saturday, May 15th, 8:00 AM-2:00 PM, Town Center, Whalom Rd. & Electric Ave.

3. Yard Waste Days – Saturdays - April 24th – May 29th, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, Closed Landfill, Youngs Road - at the closed landfill, Youngs Road – Guidelines for disposal of yard waste for Lunenburg residents: The Lunenburg Landfill, off of Youngs Road will be open for consecutive Saturdays APRIL 24TH – MAY 29, 2010, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Acceptable material: grass clippings, bark mulch, wood chips, leaves, brush (with a diameter not to exceed 3 inches ... unlimited length). Shrubbery and plantings; with the same restrictions. Any container; bags, boxes, barrels, trashcans, tarps, flower pots, etc., must be removed and taken by the resident. No household garbage, trash, or rubbish of any kind will be accepted. No materials within the Landfill area; sand, stone, gravel, etc. are to be given away or sold. Access will be restricted to the disposal area. Commercial landscapers will not be allowed to dump. OPEN TO LUNENBURG RESIDENTS ONLY. TRAVEL PERMITTED ONLY ON TOWN EASEMENT. NO TRESPASSING ON TRI-TOWN LANDING CONSTRUCTION SITE.

4. Memorial Day Services, Lunenburg Post No. 283, American Legion – Veteran's Park – 5/30/10 @ 11:45 am - Chair will be attending this year's event.

Chair expressed appreciation to Senator Flanagan, Representative Benson, Jed Nosal and other reps from AG's office as well as the Unitil representatives who explained the billing. Town will post a link to the detail information on the website.

Also announced that Unitil (Aspludh) will begin the road side tree trimming along Highland Street, from Chestnut St. to Northfield Road and a section of Holman Street. They will be trimming 8 feet (resident side) of the poles, 5 feet down from the wire and 15 feet above the wire. To begin in approximately two weeks, Unitil has hired a consultant and will be working on the vegetation management report which we can expect upon completion.

Chair acknowledged that this is Tom Mason's last official meeting and expressed appreciation for all he has done for the Town. Tom M., expressed appreciation to all those who voted for him, the employees, the Selectmen's staff and the members of this board.

APPOINTMENTS

CURRENT BUSINESS

1. Minutes - Board of Selectmen regular & executive session for 4/13/10, regular session for 4/17/10, 4/20/10, 5/1/1 and 5/4/10. Executive session for 4/27/10.

Warrants - #61 10, 5/5/10 - \$645,674.82, #62 10, 5/11/10 - \$1,312,773.20, 4th Qtr Commitment (Water Billing) 2010, 5/11/10 - \$598.55 and #23P10, 5/13/10 - \$663,540.68 reviewed and signed.

Action File Issues – Steve requested that the letter regarding the Telegram & Gazette article on illegal dumping in town should come out of the office and board concurred that we should be informed as to where the dumping may have occurred. Also questioned the line painting on the town roads particularly in the Whalom/Electric Ave. area and whether this was part of the budget cuts and per Kerry, it wasn't part of the cuts and will pass this information along to the DPW Director.

2. Town Manager Summary Evaluation – Tom explained that each member prepared an evaluation and they will individually meet with the Town Manager to review their responses and read the following composite summary which is a compilation of all into the minutes:

First category A., relationships with the board – 36.6 out of 50 – commendable range.

Category B., fiscal management – 30.6 out of 40 – commendable range.

Category C., community & public relations – 29.6 out of 40 – commendable range.

Category D., personnel administration 26 out of 45 – satisfactory range.

Category E., professional skill & abilities 35.8 out of 50 – commendable range.

Overall rating 158.6 - commendable

“Once again, as was the case last year, the overshadowing aspect of the past 12 months has been the continued fiscal crisis throughout the Commonwealth and the entire country. Declining state revenue resulted in reductions in state aid creating the difficult challenge of mid-year budget cuts that were addressed at the Special Town Meeting in December. At that meeting, we used the Stabilization Fund to cover one-time expenses, shrunk department line items yet still had to institute a week-long furlough for many town employees to balance the budget. At this year’s Annual Town Meeting, we did more of the same, using more Stabilization Fund money while losing 19+ jobs to layoffs and attrition. It is under this spectre that the Board of Selectmen offers this Town Manager summary evaluation.

Needless to say, with this as a backdrop, the vast majority of the Town Manager’s time was devoted to financial matters, most particularly the budget. And, as in past years, Ms. Speidel has demonstrated that she possesses all the skills, tenacity and flexibility required to meet even these formidable challenges in exceptional ways. As one example, her financing strategy for the DPW renovation within the levy limit is a testament to her knowledge of, and comfort level with the Town’s debt-service schedule. Clearly, the financial aspects of town government continue to be her greatest strength. The ability to create and continually modify the budget while maintaining its clarity and coherence with supporting narrative all within the constraints of the Charter timeline requirements is exemplary. The budgets she has presented during her tenure in Lunenburg have been duly recognized as clear, concise and informative not only by this Board but by the Town residents. One financial item that did not get much attention due to the extraordinary conditions this year was long-term planning - including a five-year budget forecast and capital plan. We hope to see their resumption this year.

Ms. Speidel advises the Board well on all matters that come before it as well as provides all pertinent and necessary ancillary documentation where appropriate. She shares all such information and documents with the Board, although it is the sentiment of some that this is not done equitably among all members. She is generous with her time and is prompt in her replies to all forms of communication. She confidently offers her analysis and recommendation on any and all matters that come to the Board and demonstrates a firm understanding of the facts and implications of each. With any question she cannot answer, she makes sure to seek out the proper sources. She has been a good project leader, as exemplified with the finalization of the Meadow Woods water and sewer project, the ongoing Eagle Heights proposal at the Primary School and the Town Hall renovation project now in its final design phase. These projects have (or are) going smoothly and on-budget. Soon, the newly voted DPW renovation project will be added to this list.

Within Town Hall, her demeanor and attitude is conducive to a positive work environment. While she is available to those with questions and concerns she also expects a large degree of self-motivation and responsibility from employees. The Board noted in last year’s review that the Town Manager needed to delegate more and in large part we believe this has been positively addressed. There are times when Ms. Speidel chooses to work from home on certain tasks, projects or proposals. Some on the Board believe that her lack of presence at Town Hall during these periods diminishes employee morale and lower efficiency, but this assertion is not shared by all members.

What is universally shared is that her work ethic, honesty and integrity continue to be of the highest degree.

It is only logical that with so much of the Town Manager’s time being used for the annual budget preparation, other issues were not afforded the attention they required. The town website, departmental metrics and personnel issues are certainly items that were not advanced as they might’ve under a better fiscal climate. The slow progress of these items almost assures them a continued place on this year’s goals for the Town Manager. However, while the Board recognizes the time constraints of the Town Manager, it also recognizes the serious importance of these goals and the need to strike a balance between working on them as well as focusing on the financial/budgetary aspects of the town.

Departmental metrics and personnel issues are two of the goals that must be advanced more intently. As was stated in last year’s review, there needs to be clearly established lines between management and department personnel. The Board still recommends the proposal and implementation of an organizational chart, complete with job descriptions, and the establishment of a clear set of policies, goals and objectives for all department heads and their personnel. More formal and regular employee reviews would also be a highly usefull. Methods to measure, in some demonstrable way, the achievements and effectiveness of departments is instrumental in making informed decisions on such items as finding and staffing, not only for the Board but for the public as well.

As it expires this December, this Board will be renegotiating Ms. Speidel’s contract this summer. During her tenure here, she has consistently demonstrated her ability to handle this job and effect positive change in Lunenburg. She has done it without seeking praise or the limelight. She has done it by working closely with all departments and with all elected and appointed officials. And she has done it without taking a raise for 3 years, clearly signaling her understanding of the tough times we are in. We are truly confident that she will continue that level of commitment and excellence in her next 3 years.

As Chairman of the Lunenburg Board of Selectmen, I am very proud to announce the overall summary performance evaluation of our Town Manager, Ms. Kerr Speidel as commendable.”

Steve questioned if a contract has already been negotiated and per Tom not at this point, he would like to have a couple of board members negotiate a three year contract once the election is over and a new board is structured.

Kerry expressed appreciation to all the members and would like to be able to sit down individually to discuss their concerns and at some time in the future sit down as a group to go over. Tom requested that each member take the time to sit down individually before Kerry does her self assessment evaluation.

3. Grant of Easement – 29 Meadow Lane – signed by board.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Committee Updates - None

APPOINTMENTS/REAPPOINTMENTS

1. Resignation, Earl Graves – Dam Keeper – board accepted with regrets the resignation of Earl Graves as the Dam Keeper (Lake Shirley) effective June 1st and is willing to assist the new appointees. Lake Shirley Association has presented recommendations for appointees. Steve noted that the gates are labor intensive and at some point we should look at getting these motorized. Paula also noted that we are still waiting for input on the status of the Dam Inspection and would like to discuss this at a future meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Litigation strategies

Being no further business board voted unanimously to adjourn Regular Session at 7:32 P.M. to enter into Executive Session, not to return to regular session.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Williams, Chief Administrative Assistant
Board of Selectmen